



FASHION INTERNATIONAL

NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FASHION WORLD

VOLUME #26 / ISSUE #4

SPRING'S TWO CAMPS SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

Spring was divided into two themes: utilitarian chic, in muted colors and graphic architectural shapes, versus feminine, girlish pieces that incorporated the elements of sheer, pretty, and pastel. The latter was running a parallel story to the week's soft, makeup and hair. All of the elements — fashion, makeup and hair — lost some of the severity present in Fall.

For this second round of New York shows, utilitarian chic, in primarily neutral colors, was offset by the vivid brights that

dominated daywear looks. The surprise was the return of black to the runway, particularly for day. There was more flow and movement in the clothing and, as a result, silhouettes were softer more relaxed but still retaining shape and proportion. Designers made ample use of bright Crayola colors: orange, yellow, red, green, and the undisputed accent color of the season — pink. Skirts and dresses moved up to knee length, and shoes remained flat, with the loafer playing a starring role on many of the runways. Some of the

continued on page 2

ENCHANTED EVENINGS

The late day picture puts the emphasis on simple understatement, with a refreshingly feminine slant which is evidenced in the use of gentle colors, refined detailing and embellished fabrications. This Spring, not only is there a blurring between day/night categories, but it seems as if day clothes per se are all but eliminated in favor of eveningwear.

One does not attend a **BILL BLASS** show expecting flash and fireworks, but rather a supremely flattering collection aimed at appealing to his "gals." Blass' ladies will come to him for soft pretty pastels combined with fluid shapes that are designed to showcase important jewelry. Styles run the gamut from a pale yellow gingham lace chemise to his silk



BILL BLASS

crepe columns. Blass toys successfully with this season's key element, the drawstring. Best is his pale gray silk blouson and full pant, a graceful white drawstring neck column, and the nude shantung drawstring-back coat and dress. Typically Blass is the navy crepe blouson atop white bugle beaded pants. He also knows his

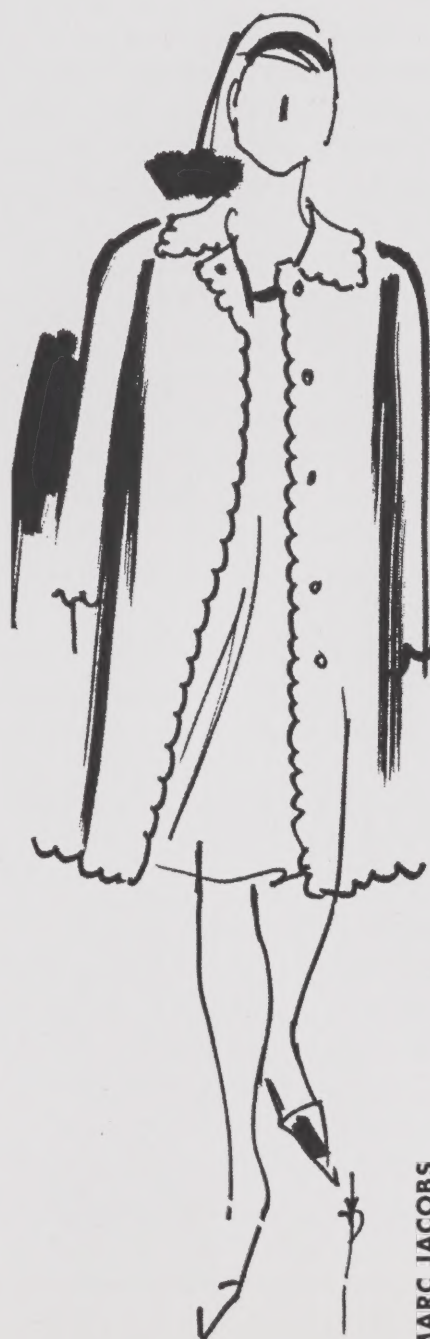
continued on page 4

strongest collections, such as Bill Blass and Marc Jacobs, showed pieces that successfully fused the utilitarian chic and pretty trends within the same garment, and could work well from day to evening. At Blass, it was a little pink jacket with decorative whipcord stitching paired with a new, shorter skirt; at Jacobs, a super chic ivory trench with a scalloped border and hem.

SUSAN LAZAR has been perfecting her classics, usually rendered with a twist, for the past few seasons, which culminated in the outstanding collection she showed for Fall '98. This season has found a new erogenous zone — the deep scoop neck featured in her tops and dresses. She also banished long, except for evening. Strongest looks were her stylish "boysuits" in thistle and lead tones; and fabulous double face "topper" coats, in muted alabaster and steel. She also showed a classic little black jersey boat neck dress, softened by light beading. The collection featured white as well, where Lazar experimented with the blouson and drawstring details that were so popular. Although she kept her palette neutral, consistent with the utilitarian trend, Lazar injected some excitement through brightly colored marbled green and fuchsia prints that worked with her pretty ribbon strap dresses.

CAROLINA HERRERA is dedicated to elegant sophistication. Her latest collection is bound to be especially pleasing to her new, younger customer base. Herrera delivered her signature uptown sophistication with a

youthful twist. She showed buttery soft leathers in "of the moment" powder pink in a variety of silhouettes, as well as an eye-popping fuchsia halter. Lilac was featured too, cleverly used as the lining to a luxurious, yet utilitarian, black poplin coat dress. Herrera has a firm hold on daywear, but continues to excel in her forte of romantic eveningwear. She wasn't afraid to make ample use of color in her evening pieces, and showed a sumptuous hydrangea blue gown — a long sleeved fitted top with a



ball gown skirt that looked new and fresh. Her finale, a beautifully fitted strapless "deb" gown, in a subtle platinum, was also a knockout!

TSE's HUSSEIN CHALAYAN

put on a fascinating intellectual presentation, highlighted by an acoustic guitar soundtrack. He succeeded in showing the parallels between clothing and architecture. Chalayan carefully built his foundation on architectural shapes, such as the fin dress in basic black and white, and proceeded to embellish from there into origami-like folding details: illustrated with a single wrap skirt, "Stage 1," through a multi-wrapped skirt, "Stage III." In spite of the multiple wraps, garments looked comfortable and non-constricting. Color was added, pattern, and finally texture. He showed a terrific little twin set and dresses in a psychedelic orange/brown/white/spiral print and worked the trends in his own way. There was pleating, layering, and some great semi-sheer cashmeres. Cashmere was, and will always be, a star at TSE. It looked both functional and feminine in the fitted scribble print sheaths and sweater sets, the print vaguely evocative of the '60s. However, he brought it all together — color, print, folding and texture — in a red parchment silk voile dress.

MARC JACOBS showed two collections with his presentation. He offered a choice of clothing that is in the same vein as the impeccable, classically chic clothing he designs for Vuitton that focuses on classic shapes and fabrications. There were cashmere tees, cotton poplin sailor tops and a gray "tonik" group that included

S.O.S. - A SOHO TRIUMPH

STYLE and SUBSTANCE

Just prior to the recent 7th on Sixth Spring '99 runway shows held in New York's Bryant Park, another group of shows called "S.O.S" (South of Seventh) made its debut in the city's Soho district. Designed to provide an affordable showcase for emerging young designers, S.O.S. is appropriately named, since the funds it raises benefits two not-for-profit organizations that help the homeless: Soho and Tribeca Partnerships, founded by Henry Buhl. The event, organized and orchestrated by Vicki Ross, operated like a well-oiled piece of machinery, as show fitted seamlessly into show with calm and comfortable efficiency. And it was well worth the trip downtown to be reminded that there are many creative and talented designers who, through lack of funds, typically remain outside the media spotlight.

Although influences here are diverse and eclectic, some common Spring trends emerge. Soft pastels including mint or pistachio, blue, lavender, and pink provide a fresh and feminine palette, that acts as a foil for a host of neutrals — olive drab or khaki, cream, off-white, stone, wheat, celadon, gray, and black. Brights, such as orange and red, add a spark, while floral prints cast a feminine mood on pretty dresses. Pants remain in the picture, with styles ranging from crop versions (often paired with midriff-revealing little tops), and

slim full length pants to drawstring closings and wide-legged palazzos. Hipsters are prominent, again exposing the midriff with crop tops, while shorts also play a key role. Hemlines run the gamut from ultra short through knee length and longer, with ankle length dresses for day and night in abundance. Asymmetrical hem lines on dresses, skirts, and tunics also have a strong presence. The gypsy influence is in the picture, with off-the-shoulder gathered blouses and full peasant-like skirts in some collections; others take a clean utilitarian approach, with no-nonsense silhouettes. Details, such as flaps and wraps, at the low slung waist of skirts and pants provide interest, along with apron-like overlays of fabric on skirts and dresses, "inside-out" seaming, and origami-like folds. Eveningwear ranges from sophisticated columns to the sportswear inspired, where simple and easy pieces are presented in luxe fabrications. The following is an overview of some of our favorite S.O.S. collections.

KATHY CASTRO presents a clean palette that includes cream, white, beige, gray, black, and celadon, as well as a smart gray pinstripe and a black/white windowpane plaid; in fabrics ranging from leather, cotton, wool, and microfiber to sheers and stretch. Castro also likes flaps, but hers tend to be used as triangular wrapping devices — on both hips of a skirt and fastened at the front



DAVID RODRIGUEZ

in a double V, at one side of another skirt, or just below the hips of a pair of low slung straight pants. She also combines and contrasts hues, exemplified by the black/white sheer sleeveless top with asymmetrical hem, that floats over a white leather slim skirt with inverted pleat; and in the white leather halter with asymmetrical scallop top that pairs with a gray plaid sheer skirt. Textural interest is spotlighted, as evidenced in a gray microfiber tank dress with bubble surface effect; and a celadon sheer fabric with little shining squares, transformed into

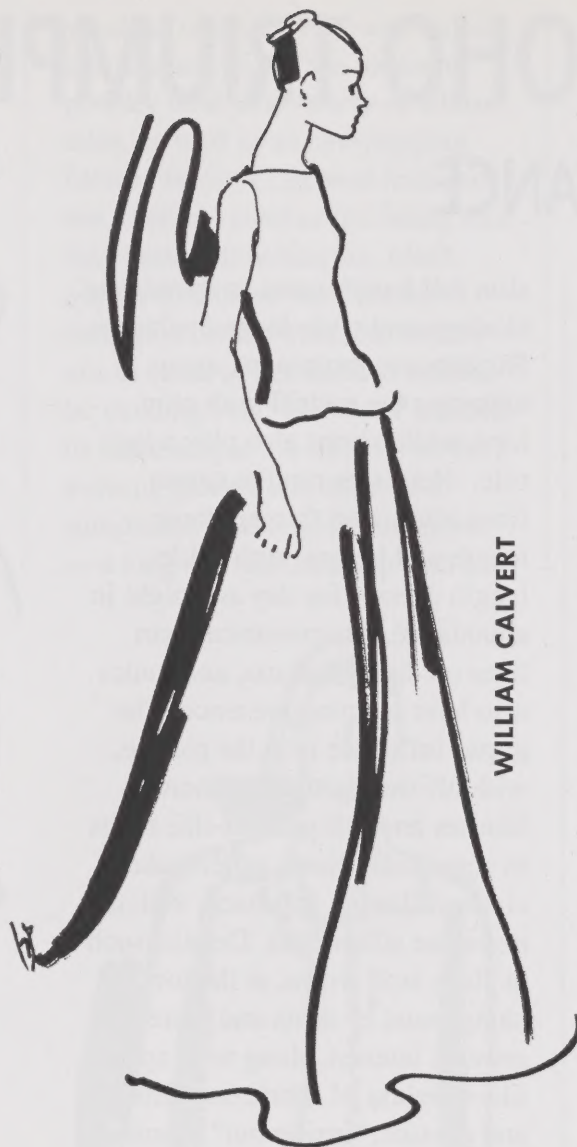
continued on page 5

ladies are sweater girls at heart, so he gives them his signature look strapless dress in beaded gray chiffon with chiffon cardigan; and a black bias neck sleeveless sweater with bugle beaded pants; and wittiest of all — a white ribbed Henley with a long navy taffeta "sailor" skirt.

Minimalist shapes and beautifully hand finished details characterize **JONVALDI's** collection. Bias finished seams, hand sewn buttonholes, and delicate pin tucking offer a luxury that can best be appreciated up close and personal. Standouts include dresses in muted, hand painted, abstract patterned stretch silk georgette; an off-the-shoulder pin tucked, stretch silk charmeuse dress, and a 3/4 sleeved sheath, in paper weight silk taffeta, with an interesting spaghetti strapped square back and horizontal pin tucking.

CARMEN MARC VALVO

proves that it's possible to look romantic and sexy at the same time. In one of his strongest collections yet, Valvo sets a highly feminine course, inspired by "mermaids, goddesses and water nymphs," with layered lace over beaded silk, sheer printed chiffon, and duchesse lamé vying for attention in a subtle palette. Simply lovely is a two-piece with an indigo crystal lace top over a long bias spiral siren skirt; an ethereal watercolor floral chiffon float in mocha and slate; the anemone beaded mesh sweater atop a long silver seamed bias skirt; and a silver knit tee with silver encrusted siren skirt. Valvo plays to the romantic in every woman with a group of delicate



misty chifcons, touched with quartz and crystal beading. However, equally appealing are Valvo's long black matte crepe gowns, detailed with Chantilly lace insets — stunning in their simplicity.

This season, **BADGLEY MISCHKA's** mood is younger, more understated, even dare we say it, casual. Sure to please the young Hollywood and NY trendsetters, like Ashley Judd and the Miller sisters, are such crowd pleasers as the pebble chiffon sweater with crystal grid or the stone tulle jacket with hammered silver thread work — both shown over travertine wool skirts. Also in the travertine, a simple wool coat

tops a glazed cashmere sweater and pebble chiffon skirt with crystal grid beadwork. Junior Leaguers will love Badgley Mischka's aurora crystal and glass tank with a billowy tulle and organza skirt in sky blue, and their metal/crystal beaded white chiffon tank with gold tulle and taffeta skirt. Not about to eschew their glamour girl image, they deliver with slim beaded gowns, of lace, chiffon or georgette, in breathtaking shades of limestone, shrimp, greige, lilac, cassia and mist.

There's a new star in the fashion firmament and his name is **WILLIAM CALVERT**, but he should be called William The Conqueror. In a short amount of time, he's managed to make the leap from apprentice at Balenciaga to stardom under his own label. Calvert distinguishes himself with this collection, his training with the French couture house having paid off handsomely. Not only are the clothes refined and feminine, they're beautifully constructed. Standouts include a floaty two-piece gown in sky blue double-faced silk organza, which is subtly interwoven with Lurex, and Calvert's "ballet" dress with cowl draped neckline, also in sky blue silk organza. Balenciaga's influence is evident in a basket weave silk gazar gown with oversized funnel neck and matte jersey bandeau, which achieves a striking obi-like effect. At the finale, Calvert offers a gorgeous group in various shades of white. These sculptural beauties include a satin-faced silk organza mini cloak atop an A-line double weight satin crepe gown.

At **HALSTON**, designer Kevan

continued on page 8

a slim, strappy top and side-slit long skirt, or a stunning sleeveless dress complete with train.

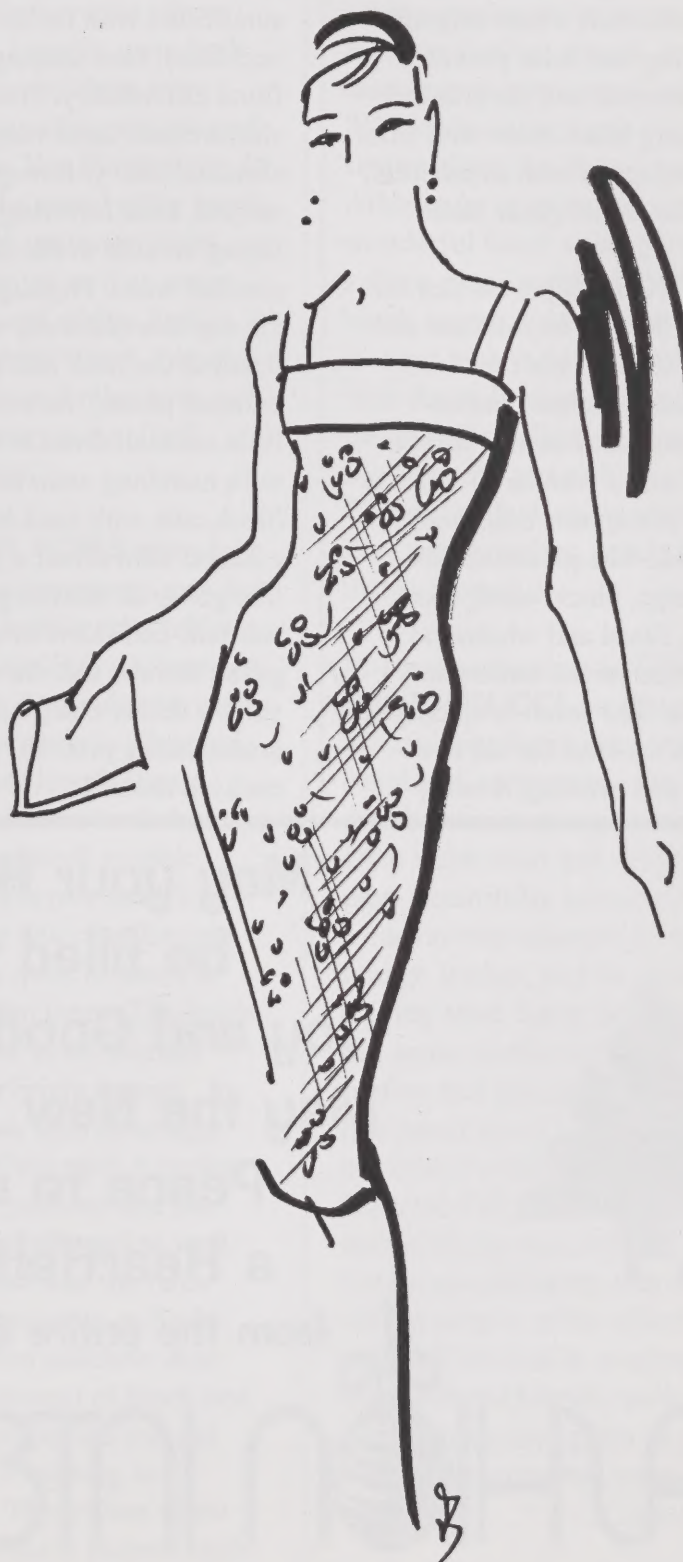
JOSEPH ISRAEL provides diversity in a collection that includes silk organza, angora, silk chiffon, mesh, jersey, tulle, gauze, shantung, latex, mousseline and viscose in white, turquoise, gray and black, with iridescent and sequin embroidery as accents. Details include his intricate multi-seams, which form a star and appear on an asymmetrical shell and a matching long skirt, as well as a sweetheart bustier sundress and a piped shell with slim pant. White angora becomes the focus of another group, that included a short hooded tank dress, and a long asymmetrical dress layered over an iridescent blue silk chiffon skirt. Outstanding is his sheer silk organza funnel neck slim "lab coat" that tops shantung slim pants, and a fitted sheer jacket with hip-slung wrapped long chiffon skirt. An "Angel" group included a sleeveless hooded long dress and an off-the-shoulder mini dress with "raw" edging, both lined with ombre chiffon. White latex is transformed into a midriff baring sleeveless top and skirt with jagged edges, and an ultra-sexy, form-fitting dress with circular cutout that exposes the cleavage. Another sexy long dress, in viscose, features a chiffon underlay, and accents the derriere, breasts, and groin area with embroidered star sequins — not for the shy!

DAVID RODRIGUEZ demonstrates an eye for the elegant and wearable with a Spring collection of beautifully cut, tailored and

detailed designs that every woman can and will want to wear. A sumptuous, yet quiet range of hues includes sand, green, lilac, pale blue, gray, white, navy, and black. His fabrics run the gamut — silk crepe and georgette, cotton, devore jersey, chiffon, quilted organza, silk brocade, lace, tulle,

gazar, mohair, and embroidered wool. Outstanding styles include the long sand jacket with half-belt that has a coordinating pinstripe vest and wide pants; a pale blue georgette and lace cardigan that tops a long matching skirt and lace shell; the lilac and green silk knee-

continued on page 6



length dress with cut-out neckline; and a stunning sleeveless dress with hemline box pleats. Also attention getting is his white pigment dyed silk djellaba that can best be described as a long float-ing coat with slits at the hemline and sleeves, worn over wool pants with narrow legs and button detail; a black tulle shift where origami-like pleating and folds provide textural interest; and the entrance-making long black dress with front slit, that's topped with an ethereal, cocoon-like white gazar jacket.

TODD THOMAS proves that the '40s and '50s can be relevant and flattering for the '90s consumer, with exquisite dresses and ensembles that demonstrate an eye for detail and a wonderful sense of style. He juxtaposes rich, sumptuous brocade-like patterns with solids (beige, black, coral, blue, mustard), floral and whimsical multicolored prints, embroidery and denim. The result is an elegant effect that's a feast for the eye both day and evening. A sexy,

form-fitting and strappy below-the-knee dress draws attention to the bust with pleats; while draping appears on a long slim dress, this time lending an elegant, sophisticated effect. He pairs little denim jackets with a variety of ultra-full, '50s calf length skirts in a myriad of different patterns, and provides a host of fabulous fit 'n' flare sundresses with ruched contrast necklines, bust draping or red floral embroidery. Then there's the shirtdresses: these range from the slim and chic yellow/gray/green striped, knee hovering and form-fitting version to the full skirt with cinched waist. Highlights include the cap sleeved dress with fold detail at the neck and inverted contrast pleats; the brown or black little cocktail dress in eyelet lace with matching satin beneath; the black coat with back belt, that tops a longer slim dress; a gossamer-like group of chiffon gowns with full mid-calf skirts in a host of pastel florals; and the dramatic yellow duster coat, worn over a coordinating print fit 'n' flare cocktail dress.

GABRIELLA ZANZANI offers a subtle palette of cream, aqua, lavender, banana, wheat, khaki, charcoal, orange, coal and black in linen, poplin, jersey, silk/nylon, twill and tropical wool: All of which places the focus firmly on simple, wearable and functional styles. These include a group of elegant knee-hovering dresses with geometric flaps that fall from the neckline. This flap effect reappears on a sleeveless tunic paired with pants, and on the strappy top that accompanies a side-slit ankle length skirt, and also creates layers in a knee length sleeveless dress. Other standouts here are the slim and fitted long coat, worn smartly over pants and top; the long duster worn over a long A-line hipster skirt; a sheer strappy shift with asymmetric hemline; and a tank with a re-revealed seam at the front that pairs with wide pants. This "inside-out" seaming is also prominent in a long hipster skirt.



May your Holidays
be filled with
Joy and Good Will and
May the New Year bring
Peace to us all,
a Heartfelt Wish

from the entire staff of the

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a stylish reefer coat and a cap sleeved dress. His strongest grouping included pieces in black double face, especially his smart tuxedo pant paired with either a perfect black silk sailor top or a 3/4 length sleeve double-faced top with scalloping along the hem. There were pretty touches, such as a black grosgrain ribbon waistband on a black nylon top. His "second" collection, the one for his ingenue clientele, featured smocking and drawstring details. Jacobs used light cotton voile and poplins mostly in white, with a few lavender and pale gray pieces, such as a shiny gray cotton/canvas pant. It made for an interesting contrast between the two types of women he was speaking to.

ZANG TOI jumped right into this season's mood for pretty, with his amusingly named "A Woman's Best Friend Platinum and Diamond" collection. Toi worked a platinum and white rococo cherub print into some snappy day suits and shifts, and gave some much needed life to gray with his double platinum silk taffeta pieces. Standouts included a '70s inspired "hostess" jumpsuit with a neat little self belt, finished with the tiniest diamante belt buckle, that Sharon Stone might be inclined to wear. As usual, Toi excelled for evening, incorporating his take on pastel in an ice blue silk "platinum and diamond" strapless gown with intricate "18th century cameo embroidery." The ice green silk taffeta "Vienna Ball Gown" was a winner too, featuring sunburst pleating in the full ball gown skirt.

DIANE VON FURSTENBERG simultaneously held a book signing cocktail party and presented

her latest collection as a still life montage in her downtown studio. This season, she collaborated with designer Catherine Malandrino to create romantic jersey floral dresses in keeping with her signature colorful prints. Look to her modern little "Isabella" dress, the quintessential day-to-evening matte jersey dress with a drape neck and the fashionable elbow length sleeve. Lengths were both short and long, and there were drawstrings, smocking details and keyhole fronts. Von Furstenberg fit right in with the pastel color trend, there was pink, turquoise, light blue and violet, as well as some graphic black and white. And as the program notes stated, "wrap dresses, classic and otherwise, are available in every group (and always will be)."

The **MICHAEL KORS** show had an upbeat, positive energy and that all-American feel for which Kors is known. He took his audience on a trip to upper-class suburbia with the classics — anoraks, Bermuda shorts, and knee length skirts. Utilitarian sportiness took the day, with ultra clean sleek graphic looks. Bright Crayola shades of orange, yellow and cinnabar red were offset by quiet neutrals in khaki and brown tones. The bright monochromatic looks worked best, such as a bright orange sailcloth anorak with an orange silk ripstop taffeta pant. A perfect yellow cotton pullover and Bermuda short looked good as well. Another favorite was the moss green cashmere/cotton pullover and khaki cotton sailcloth short that was reminiscent of black and white photographs of a dressed down Jackie O relaxing in Hyannis Port. There were a few twists too, a tortoise paillette tank

dress, and a giraffe print, calf skirt that hit above the knees.

Don't be fooled by the theatrics and side show atmosphere of a **MARITHE & FRANCOIS GIRBAUD** runway show. There are some serious clothes to be had. For Spring, the Girbauds successfully combined street fashion and active sportswear in some great black and cobalt pieces, and a fun snap-button black track suit with 3/4 length sleeves and silver stripes along the flared pant leg. Athletic wear aside, there were wonderful black suits, particularly a three-piece capri pant suit and a black asymmetric sailcloth trench to wear with it — all in keeping with the utilitarian theme that ran through the collection. Leave your bag at home and pick up one of Girbaud's black shirts with back kangaroo pouches, handy to carry things around in.

Luxe was abundant at **CHADO/ RALPH RUCCI**, but Rucci always kept his clothes sophisticated and understated. He opened the show on a strong note with a crisp white shirt and orange slim pant, beautifully accessorized with a canvas tote trimmed in bright orange leather, and an orange driving shoe. Later on, he brought out some terrific ecru canvas reefers and rain jackets to go with this pared down silhouette. He continued with long skirt lengths from the Fall. The season's geometric theme was evinced in his long trapezoid skirts that showed off the artistry of his spiral seaming, and his skill at manipulating double-faced fabrics, such as quietly luxurious grain de poudre. Pants were great too, especially

continued on page 8

the slim back seam and laser pants. Rucci showed drawstring pants that were in keeping with the season's penchant for the drawstring, but the tailored looks were best. For evening, Rucci added a bit of architecture and shine — his double-faced black silk crepe "harness" front dress and a powder pink "Pauline" coat worn over the same "harness" top were standouts.

BILL BLASS' models looked pretty in pink. Other pastels he used included baby blue and a pale lemon yellow. The soft color palette injected freshness and youth into his latest endeavor. Blass lived up to his program's promise of showing "the effortless spirit of youth." There were wonderful little twin sets and soft little ribbed tanks. Blass incorporated some of the season's girly trends too, but in a more sophisticated fashion. Some feminine details were the whipstitching on pale pink and blue short jackets, worn with a new short above the knee skirt or chic Capri pant. He also worked the drawstring in a pale pink dress (with the drawstring as a back closure), and a baby blue column dress with empire waist. Another great drawstring look was a gray cashmere strapless top, also with a drawstring back closure. Overall, clothes had softness and fluidity. Highlights for evening were pink numbers — a smashing Audrey Hepburn taffeta dress with bateau neckline and a gala-worthy pale pink taffeta strapless evening gown.

Hall has the daunting task of keeping the Halston "oeuvre" alive and viable for the '90s without sacrificing his own personal vision. For the most part he succeeds, especially when he keeps it simple. Most successful are Hall's understated coral cashmere bias tee and "fishtail" skirt, and a chic cashmere twin set, in sand, with pearl encrusted lace-front camisole and satin skirt. Hall also shows some attractive dinner suits in shark gray wool, sparked with sequined tube tops, and a crisp white cotton shirt worn with a silver sequined long slim skirt.

JACKIE ROGERS goes her own way as usual, emphasizing femininity and dressmaker detailing. Stunners range from a pale gray, cap sleeved silk cocktail dress, with panel front, to a glitter touched, languid chiffon column, with drape neckline and matching stole. Roger's entrance-maker is a satin tank gown, with keyhole neckline, topped by a delightful beaded tulle jacket.

For the most part, **BOB MACKIE** avoids the razzle dazzle this season in favor of a more down to earth approach. Very pretty is a blouson flapper dress with hip stitched pleat skirt in palest lime, trimmed in aqua satin, and a white jeweled chiffon slip top gown, with delicate bias godets, and matching shrug. Best of all are Mackie's youthful pale flowered brocades, particularly the yellow jacket with celadon satin trim over a celadon crepe tunic and pants, and the celadon faille ball gown with brocade corselet bodice.

Enchanted evenings must also

include **VERA WANG's** understated navy ombre, "fizz" beaded, cropped pants and jersey turtle-neck, and a lime chiffon column with matte turquoise beading; **DONALD DEAL's** slim gowns, in beige or white silk crepe, with crystal bead detailing or bias satin trim; **GABRIELLE CARLSON's** ethereal mint/white leaf print chiffon and charmeuse drop waist dress, and her iridescent taffeta cowl neck tunic and slim pants in mercury; **JULIAN MACDONALD's** crystal beaded transparent black mesh slip dress or one-shoulder caviar beaded sheath with pink/white/gray bias stripes, and his fabulous all-over beaded knit, mid-calf tank dress, in silver on white.

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INTERNATIONAL)

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1 Year Subscription \$100.00
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VOL. XXVI No. 4
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

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FASHION INTERNATIONAL
